

'Did you see that programme the other day? . . .' seems to be a very common question in all sorts of conversations. All of us either watch television or listen to the radio and our lives would be much impoverished without these two media, but how do we regard them? Are we critical, do we blame the media, do we accept what we hear? Are we discriminating, watching or listening to particular programmes which we find stimulating, entertaining or informative or do we have 'wall paper media' with television or radio constantly on in the background?

Wide-ranging changes in the way in which the media of television and radio are owned, operated and regulated are envisaged by the 1989 Broadcasting Bill currently before parliament. Elsewhere in this magazine, Michael Brunson has written of some of those specific changes and we hear also of the ways in which the Mothers Union is monitoring the influence of the media on family life. But what do you think?

As a parish, a lively christian community, we need to be concerned, deeply concerned, for the ways in which values and attitudes are communicated in our society. Surely this implies that we must take seriously the fundamental changes now under discussion. I say, quite deliberately, values and attitudes, for our concern is not just for the presentation of 'The Daily Service' or 'Highway' or 'Songs of Praise', but must be much wider.

First, our concern should include the nature of programmes. Here the christian concern for human growth and wholeness needs to be reflected. Programmes which stimulate imagination, creativeness, vision, as well as providing information and understanding upon which we can make decisions, are a vital part of the whole, but is our appetite for gratuitous violence and mutual abuse really of greater value?

Second, we must be careful to see that our faith and our understanding are given true appreciation - we all know batty vicars, but do television vicars all need to be odd, or indeed we all know a Mrs. Mangel but we also know, and probably are, rather more ordinary women and men of faith. If this 'stereotyping' happens in christianity how much easier it is to fall into the dangerous trap of stereotyping and making caricatures of ethnic minorities, foreigners, homosexuals, people of other faiths and many other groups - be it a chance remark on a quiz show or the unwillingness of a presenter to learn how to pronounce a person's name.

Third, access to the media. 'He who pays the piper calls the tune' runs the proverb and much truth there is in it. Certainly we must ask serious questions about TV franchises being sold to the highest bidder, and the safeguards built into this notion. Conversely, with the rapid growth of 'community radio' ever more interest groups and communities have access to the media, which is surely a good thing, within an overall framework of regulation and standards. However, we have seen the consequences of TV Evangelism in the US, where regulation seems to have been singularly inadequate and we have also witnessed in Roumania and Eastern Europe the total power which can be exerted by highly regulated broadcasting. But if we accept the notion of 'light touch' control, whose touch is it, how light is it, and how does the public exert any influence?

I do hope you will take this important debate seriously and explore with friends and neighbours issues which the Broadcasting Bill raises both for us as individuals and for our society. Are these changes helping us to be more fully God's children living in God's world, or are we moving towards impoverishing our lives?

Brian Leathard

The Broadcasting Bill

Did you know that, on average, every man, woman and child in Britain now watches 25 hours of television a week? It's a staggering figure, and, apart from raising the question of how people find the time, it makes the changes the government is bringing in, which will substantially alter British television, all the more important. Because, with people spending so much time in front of the box, changes in what appears on it may mean changes to the British way of life, no less.

The government's declared aim, as with so much of what it does these days, is to widen consumer choice. They perceive a demand for yet more television, though whether that's primarily from the television bosses, or from the viewing public, they don't make very clear. Either way, we are going to get a fifth television channel, and the way the present ITV companies receive their licences to operate is to be changed, so that the chief, but not the only, factor in getting such a licence, is how much you are prepared to pay for it.

Similarly, radio is to expand too. Here, the demand from the consumers is clearer. For some time, various minority groups, the Greek community in London, say, or local areas, have wanted to run their own local radio services, and this they will now, subject to a limit on numbers, be able to do. But, in addition to up to three hundred such 'neighbourhood' stations, there are also to be three new national stations, made possible by forcing the BBC to give up some of its wavelengths. Thus, classical music on Radio 3 will no longer be heard on medium wave.

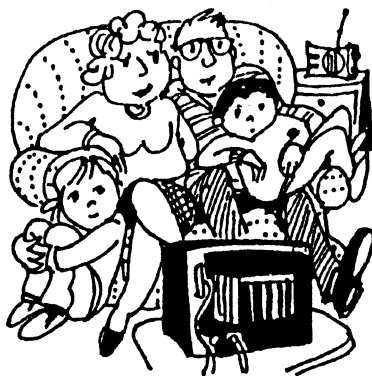
So much for the plans. What are we going to see and hear as a result of it all? The major concern of the opposition parties has been with the quality of programmes. Thus, Shadow Home Secretary, Roy Hattersley: 'There may be more buttons to press, but will they increasingly produce variations on four dreary themes - third rate old movies, foreign soap operas, quiz shows and cartoon comedies.

Home Office Minister, David Mellor, whose job it is to take the bill through the House of Commons, disagrees. 'High quality is a mark of British broadcasting', he declares. 'That will be maintained, while choice for the viewer and listener will be massively expanded'. But choice of what? That is literally the several-million-pound question. For, as the ITV companies put in their multi-million pound bids, in the hope of multi-million pound returns, viewers and listeners will want to know - what say do I have in all this?

It should be said here that, in the case of BBC Television, the answer is - the same say that you always had. BBC Television will, for the time being, continue to operate exactly as it does now, with the same regard to public service broadcasting, and thus subject to

the same pressures to show programmes which the BBC believes its viewers not only want to see, but, on occasion, should see.

But when the present ITV network becomes 'Channel Three' the rules governing its output are to be deliberately relaxed. It will be subject to what the government sees as the 'light touch' of authority from the new Independent Television Commission, which will replace the IBA. Mr. Mellor insists that companies who bid for the new franchises will have to surmount a 'Becher's Brook' test of their ability and determination to produce quality programmes.



But how many? There is a requirement in the Broadcasting Bill that there must be a high quality news service, high quality current affairs programmes, and 'programmes, other than news and current affairs programmes, which are of high quality'. And how much time is to be given over to these high quality programmes? And what exactly are they? The Bill says only that the new Independent Television Commission must ensure that 'sufficient time' be devoted to them. There is no further definition of their nature. There is no specific requirement for the production of documentaries, or drama, or, of special interest to many readers of this magazine, any religious programmes on Channel Three at all.

Indeed, the future of religious broadcasting will provide MP's, if they so desire, and perhaps if enough of their constituents write to them, with a convenient touchstone to test out the government's real intentions about 'high quality' programming. We must assume that virtually all serious, factual programmes come under such a definition. In fact, there is no legal requirement at present on ITV to broadcast any religious programmes at all. The fact that they do is the result, as much as anything, of a 'gentleman's agreement' between ITV and the BBC over the years not to compete during certain times - notably the so-called 'God Slot' in the early part of Sunday evening. There is certainly nothing in the new Bill to prevent the new Channel Three putting 'Blind Date' opposite the BBC's 'Songs of Praise'.

So will it? In the new climate of freedom which the government says it is intent on introducing, that is going to depend on how the new Independent Television Commission goes about its business. And that in turn will depend on how the Commission decides to interpret, not only its remit to ensure that there is a suitable mix of programmes, but public opinion about the sort of programmes people want to see.

In other words, the 'God Slot' is only going to survive, at least on ITV, if we, the parishioners of St. James, and many other parishes besides, tell the government and the new television bosses whether we want it to.

Michael Brunson

The Mothers' Union and the Media

The object of the Mothers' Union is the strengthening and preservation of marriage and Christian family life. Its concern is also with all legal and social matters which affect the quality of family life. The Media Department of the MU encourages all members to use the media in a positive way. It reports to the broadcasting authorities and to members, and responds to media developments such as the new Broadcasting Bill.

This Department administers the Media Awareness Project, an ecumenical venture, which enlists the help of all mainline Christian denominations to:

- a) increase awareness of the effects of the media;
- b) improve understanding of how the media work;
- c) recognise underlying values that are found in the media and evaluate them from a Christian viewpoint; and
- d) provide information on how to use the media.

What does the word media include? It includes the press, television, theatre, radio, video, cinema, magazines, books and advertising. Do you ever see a poster, read a newspaper, read the side of a bus, listen to the radio or watch television? Then you are influenced by the media.

An MU survey on the government white paper re broadcasting received the following comments as to how the respondents felt family life would be affected. 93% thought that more channels with a wide range of programs would mean that television would become an irritant to harmonious family life. Friction over choice, and fragmentation with each member of the family watching his/her own television set could also occur. Lack of conversation and erosion of concentration because of the nature of TV might be consequences. As television depicts lifestyles and sets standards, these might become more dominant than those of the family and might be lower.

The Moderator of the United Reformed Church writes:

'Responsible Journalism and entertainment are vital facts of democratic living. Our country is well served by its broadcasting authorities and by some newspapers and magazines. Christians, however, have a duty to be vigilant in seeking to maintain standards of truth, justice and goodness. Individual Christians as well as churches have their part to play. I commend the Media Awareness Project unreservedly in its attempt to mobilise Christian opinion and give it a hearing.

As individuals we can let our MP's know our concerns about the future of broadcasting. We should bombard the media bosses with both praise and criticism.

Wake 'em up! Apathy is our worst enemy!

[I am indebted to the MU Media literature for the content of this article.]

Janet Jeffries

The Work of a Reader

We in the parish of St. James, Hampton Hill, have within these last ten years had two long interregnums; during these there has been much for the Readers to do to keep the smooth running of the church going.

What do Readers do?

First and foremost, Readers take part in the regular church services: at the Holy Eucharist they may be required to read the Gospel and the other Old and New Testament readings, lead the intercessions, preach and administer the chalice at the Communion. Readers can be responsible for the informal services and for Mattins and Evensong if required. Additional duties may be involved, such as the changing of the altar frontal etc. in accordance with the required seasonal colours, and acquaintance with the lectionary is useful here. In all these areas Readers are part of the congregation, they are one's fellow members in the church and part of its family, but anyone thinking of becoming a Reader must envisage a period of training for the work they may be required to do.

Readers are not licensed until they have followed a recognised and supervised course leading to the General Readers' Certificate; this comprises a course on Biblical foundations, courses on Christian Traditions and Church History, and on the work of a Reader. Qualification is awarded on assessment. Local groups of Readers also meet together and discuss various issues of pastoralia, for example, bereavement visiting, the Aids issue and so forth.

The Parish Church is available to all who live in the parish for baptisms, marriages, burials and cremations. They must be catered for even if there is no vicar, so the services of a local priest must be obtained when necessary, although Readers can officiate at burials and cremations, and can prepare parents for the baptism of their children and cope with the arrangements for marriages. All these occasions give the Reader the chance to get to know people who are outside the church. This is a most important role; what sort of image of the church is the Reader putting over?

Visiting the sick and lonely must not be forgotten, nor the care of those who are admitted to hospital. Visits are much appreciated, and opportunities are never-ending.

Readers are dependent, however, on whether their Vicar is disposed to use them. In St. James's Church there is a tradition of involvement of the laity, so that not only the Readers but many church members are involved in the various activities, services, visiting and arrangements. There is, in churches where there is good lay participation, an integration and coherence which links up a parish with St. Paul's local congregations of God's people, and the Readers are an integral part of this coherence. Part of their regular prayers should be for and in the congregation, and for their calling to be a strength in the fellowship of the church.

Hannah Stanton

St. Paul the Traveller

Paul Revis. The name rings a bell - not only a bell but also a guitar, and activates an orchestra, and writes the music and words, and, I think, helps to train those who take part. For a quiet person, he makes a lot of noise and is deeply concerned with his music. Having been named after St. Paul, does he feel a special affinity, I wonder?

And Bridget Fairbairn, who is able gently but firmly to cajole a somewhat motley crew of children and grown-ups into producing, after a great deal of hard work on her part, the sound which the composer had in mind - and the words which are so important. And Pam Atkinson, who worked with Bridget and others to make the Deanery Summer Workshops so successful in bringing together so many children for so much fun and to learn about the life of St. Paul.

So, on the evening of Sunday 14th January, we came together in St. James's Church to listen to 'St. Paul the Traveller'. The orchestra and choir about filled the chancel, with the young children to the front who were both confident and competent, either reading or singing. Altogether there was plenty of musical sound, and it was all so cheerful in spite of the oft repeated words 'Kill him, Stone him'!

The spontaneous applause at the end of the singing showed how much we had enjoyed ourselves.

Pam Atkinson and three of the older children had introduced the musical work itself and afterwards, they spoke about the Workshops of last summer. Then we all joined in a roof-raising rendering of 'Our God Reigns', followed by 'Ascribe Greatness to our God', before moving off to inspect the visual art which had been produced by the children in the summer - with which I was very impressed - and to see a video of the children with the music.

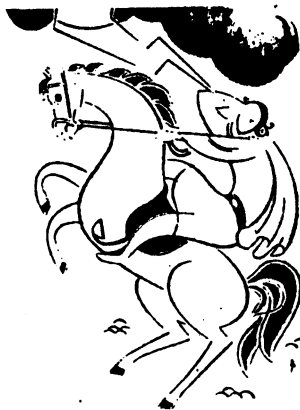
Soon the South Aisle was filled with cheerful and friendly chatter over coffee and cakes, with everyone acclaiming our Paul, and Bridget and Pam, which, from the happy looks on their faces must have been reward for all the hard work which had gone into 'St. Paul the Traveller'.

Thank you all.

The script finished with these words - 'And that is the task that he leaves to us all. To follow his footsteps and hear the Lord's call'.

Alison Thompson

[Audio tape recordings are available from Paul Revis (979 4858) at £1.50 each.]



**Saint Paul
The Apostle**



LENT 1990

Hampton Council of Churches groups

This year's series of Lent Groups will start on Monday 5th March and will run for five weeks. Each group will be following an audio cassette course entitled 'Turning Points'. In the next couple of weeks forms will appear in church for people to fill in as to which day of the week they would be able to attend a group. The groups, leaders and venues will be sorted out later and people informed about their particular group.

Don't forget to mark Saturday 28th April in your diary for a special service to celebrate and give thanks for any new understanding that has come about as a result of the course.

Helen Taylor

Special Services in Church

Ash Wednesday 28th February

20.00 Parish Communion with
Imposition of Ashes

Each Sunday in Lent,
starting 4th March

21.00 Compline

Kew Gardens

An opportunity to hear about this local landmark of great natural beauty and international importance

An Informal Lecture by Dr. Ghillean Prance,
Director of Kew Gardens

Thursday 8 March, 8 pm Parish Hall

Entrance £1.50 adults;
75p children & senior Citizens

Proceeds to charity (Details to follow)



Parish Carol Singing

Sixteen members of St. James's, lead by Olive Hayward and including Brian and his family, made their way round the parish on Thursday evening, 21 December. The evening was mild and the response to the singing was very favourable. The sum of £41.77 was collected and has been sent to Crisis at Christmas. We ended the evening with our traditional hot mince pies and coffee at Wayside.

David Lloyd

**League of Friends' Teddington Memorial Hospital
Concert by Staines Salvation Army Corps Band
in aid of new General Practitioner Unit**

**8 pm, Tuesday 27 February
at Baptist Church, Church Road, Teddington**

**Tickets (£1) from Hospital Shop
or 'phone 977 2212, ext.35 or 977 4206, or at door**

Help us reach our £300,000 target!

Scout Group News

John Nielsen, group Scout Leader, returned from his exciting trip to Mount Kilimanjaro and the surrounding area in time to spend Christmas with his family.

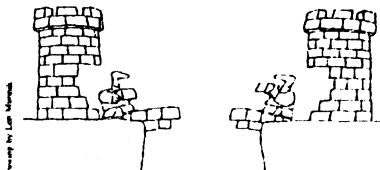
The 3rd Hampton Hill Venture Scout group is increasing in numbers. Any boy or girl aged 15 - 20 who would like to join the varied activities should ring Peter Brittain (Acting Venture Scout Leader) on 979 4970.

Both Brown and Gold Packs of Cub Scouts, meeting on Monday and Wednesday evenings, have vacancies for boys aged 8 - 10 years; keen footballers are especially welcome! Ring Akelas Colin and Maureen Hucklesby, 898 9609, for details.

Susan Horner

Stewardship Giving

	1988(£)	1989(£)
Jan. - Mar.	5,759	5,549
Apr. - Jun.	4,447	4,286
Jul. - Sep.	4,395	5,073
Oct. - Dec.	<u>5,319</u>	<u>5,864</u>
Total for year	19,920	20,772





**ANNUAL BUFFET
SUPPER PARTY**
(with a Scottish Flavour)
Saturday 10 February
7.30 to 11.30pm
Parish Hall,
School Road

Licensed Bar - Music - Dancing - Competitions - Entertainments

Tickets £5 Including supper

Phone 979 8641, 979 2839 or 979 6673 or your HHA Street Representative

Electoral Roll

Every six years the Parish Electoral Roll is re-made. 1990 is one such year. If you are on the Church Electoral Roll now, you will be visited soon by a member of the Parochial Church Council and asked if you would like to be on the new roll. If you are not on the present Electoral Roll, or are unsure, please contact either Jennifer Lloyd (979 2964) or the Vicar (979 2069).

The Church Electoral Roll is a register of all those who are interested in the Church and its work and who wish to align themselves with it. You must:

- a) have been baptised;
- b) be a member of the C.of E. or a Church in Communion with it;
- c) be at least 16 years old;
- d) be resident in the parish or have attended worship in the parish habitually for at least six months; and
- e) have completed and signed an application form, available in church or from the telephone numbers above.

From the Registers

Funerals

December	1	Morrie Edith Olive Dew	4 Fitzwygram Close	Aged 79
	21	Tom Ransom	21 Ringwood Way	Aged 81

If you no longer feel close to God, which of you has moved?

Regular Weekly Services

Sunday	08.00	Holy Communion
	09.30	Parish Communion (except first Sunday in month)
Monday to Friday	09.15	Morning Prayer
Tuesday	09.30	Holy Communion
Thursday	19.15	Holy Communion



Other Services and Dates to Note

February	4	09.30	Informal Service
		15.00	Holy Baptism
		18.30	Choral Evensong
	5	09.30	Editorial Board, 19 St. James's Road
		20.00	M.U. Evening Discussion Group: Sue Lawton on WRVS, Wayside
	6	20.00	Tuesday Club: Bring & Buy Auction, Wayside
	10	19.30	HHA Buffet Supper Party, Parish Hall
	11	18.30	Prayer 'n' Praise
	14		Art Exhibition, Hampton School
	15	20.00	P.C.C., Vestry
	18	15.00	Holy Baptism
		18.30	Choral Evensong
	20	20.00	Tuesday Club: 'An Unknown Journey' with Margaret Groves, Wayside
	21		Saints and Martyrs of Africa
	23		Polycarp, Bp. of Smyrna, Martyr c.155
	25	09.30	Mr. Geoffrey Duncan, Schools Officer of the C. of E. Board of Education, to preach
		18.30	Prayer 'n' Praise
	27		George Herbert, Priest, Pastor, Poet 1633
		20.00	Concert in aid of Teddington Hospital, Baptist Church, Church Road, Teddington
	28		Ash Wednesday
		20.00	Parish Communion with Imposition of Ashes
March	1		David, Bishop, Patron Saint of Wales c.601
	2		Chad, Bp. of Lichfield, Missionary, 672
	4	09.30	Informal Service
		18.30	Parish Communion with Healing Ministry
		21.00	Compline



Advance Notices

March	5		Lent Groups start
		20.00	M.U. Evening Discussion Group, Wayside
	6	20.00	Tuesday Club: 'The Village Bakery', Wayside
	7		Concert at Lady Eleanor Holles School
	8	20.00	Talk by Dr. Ghilleen Prance, Director of Kew Gardens,
	21	20.00	P.C.C., Vestry

[Parish Hall]

Copy Date for March issue: 11 February